

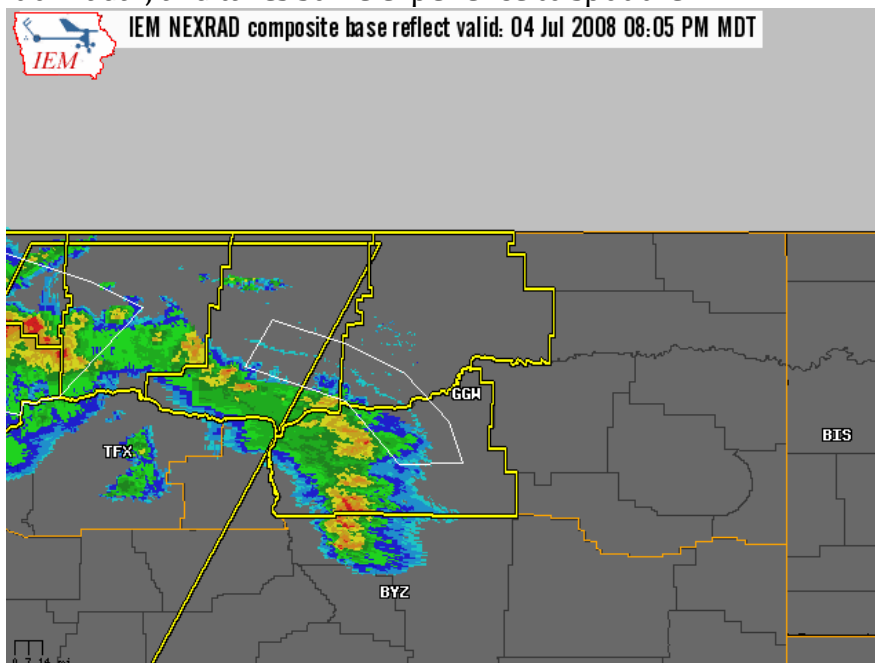


AP photo/Rolla, ND Tornado 7/8/08

Under the Big Sky July 11, 2008

Severe Weather Season: We've been fairly lucky with our severe weather season so far this year. We've only one report of large hail that produced some widespread crop and property damage near Bainville the last week of June. Our neighbors to the east had some excitement recently with a tornado that went through Rolla, ND on Monday July 7th. Here are some photos and an article about it: <http://www.kxmc.com/getPage.asp?PageId=15> and <http://www.minotdailynews.com/page/content.detail/id/516782.html?nav=5010>

Gust Front event July 4: Many towns across the region had to postpone their fire works show because of a cold front that pushed through the area causing winds of 25-40 mph with higher gusts through early Saturday morning. We actually had a line of thunderstorms push into our region from the southwest, and those thunderstorms produced a gust front that was 40-60 miles out ahead of the actual storms. This happens in our region about once every summer, and there have been times that the skies are totally clear, and suddenly you get hit with 50-80 mph winds, but the actual thunderstorm may still be an hour away. We do issue severe thunderstorm warnings for this, but it can be confusing for the public to have the winds without any real thunder. In the radar image from that evening, the gust front is the little blue line within the white polygon area (that was the warning our office issued). It's pretty faint on radar, and takes some experience to spot them.



Another problem that evening was with fireworks and lightning causing fires, and I've heard several of the volunteer fire departments got some late night runs in. The fuels are slowly drying out, but thankfully we do have cooler weather coming up for the weekend, but that's not going to last long with the 6-10 and 8-14 day outlooks in the middle of the month showing warmer than normal temperatures for our region once again. The precipitation forecast is for normal conditions during the middle of the month as well.

Skywarn Modernization Team: I'm on a NWS team to update the Basic and Advanced Skywarn Spotter Guidebooks. We are going to combine them, and make them portable, something you can have in your glove box. It will also be less wordy, and with shorter descriptions, and photos and graphics to better identify thunderstorm features. We will also be creating an online training site as well so that weather spotters can go through the training online, on their own time. Hopefully it will be ready to go by next spring! I know I'm always competing with calving and seeding in the spring when we do our Skywarn trainings, so this is an opportunity to allow more ways for people to do the training. The old guidebooks are available online at: <http://www.weather.gov/os/brochures/basicspot.pdf>
http://www.weather.gov/os/brochures/adv_spotters.pdf

Go Green Event: We are getting the agenda together for the **Go Green!** event at the Fort Peck Interpretive Center on Saturday July 19th from 10 am to 3 pm. If you have a chance to take a road trip that weekend, it should be a fun event with speakers discussing topics such as global warming, how to properly dispose of electronic waste, how businesses big and small can take steps to be greener and we'll be showcasing an electric car, have information on organic farming and composting in your backyard and many hands on activities for the kids.

John Pulasky update: By now, some of you have probably noticed that John Pulasky hasn't been on the radio lately. He has some irregular heart beats, and has been recovering from surgery. If you'd like to send him any well wishes, feel free to email them to me, and I'll forward them on to him. He's mentally ready to be up and hopping again, but the physical side of his recovery is slowing him down.

NOAA Weather Radio's are coming to Albertson's: The Midland WR-100 weather radio receivers are coming to a local Albertson's near you by next week. The Montana CBS television stations are helping promote the campaign, which allows you to get a radio for \$29.99, which is \$20 off of the regular price! Look for a display with either Fred Pfeiffer or Bob McGuire's photos on it at your local store.

Recent Flooding events in the mid-west bring up issues with the public's understanding of terminology of flood events, as well as issues with people who didn't purchase flood insurance and have been devastated flooding this year.

Confusion over a "100 Year" flood event: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25463476/>

From a Floodplain Manager on the increase in flood events:
<http://www.madison.com/wsj/home/column/other/291207>

Why Men Die in Floods: Time Magazine.
<http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,1817603,00.html#>

California (heat and fires): My brother called me recently to complain to me about having to fight fires in California in 100+ heat. I told him I'm only in advertising, not production, and couldn't turn down the heat for him. The conditions in California have been serious enough that the Governor has activated the state's Excessive Heat Action Plan. He's also banned all open fires, but my brother said that he still gave out plenty of tickets to folks who didn't take the ban seriously while camping in Yosemite NP during the 4th of July holiday. At one point in the past two weeks, California had 1400 wildfires they were dealing with.

<http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/jul2008/2008-07-07-092.asp>

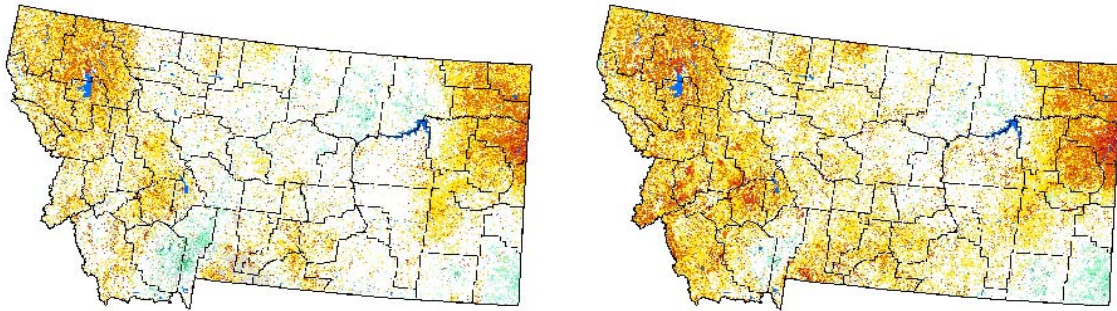
The following are recommendations from the California Office of Emergency Services, but it works for Montana as well (I added a few comments of my own in green):

- Creating a cooler environment. Making sure that window air conditioners are installed snugly and ducts are properly insulated, weather stripping doors and sills and placing window reflectors made of cardboard covered with aluminum foil between windows and drapes (If you don't have AC, the basement is a great place to cool off!)
- Drinking plenty of water, especially when taking medication
- Wearing lightweight and light-colored clothing
- Avoiding physical activities during periods of peak temperatures (2 pm to 6 pm here)
- Checking on neighbors, family members and pets to ensure they are not being harmed by the heat (the elderly are most vulnerable, as are those with illnesses)
- Watching for signs of heat-related illness, including fatigue, nausea, headache and vomiting (Avoid alcohol as well, not only does it cause the above problems all on it's own, but it can exacerbate heat problems as well!)
- Visiting malls, theaters and other public places that are air-conditioned if a person doesn't have his or her own air conditioning (Ok, I know it's a long way to the mall, but maybe you have some friends/family you can visit and play a card game or watch a movie!)

Our Incident Meteorologist was dispatched last week to the Iron Mountain Fire near Junction City, CA. The NWS currently has 30 incident meteorologists who are deployed as fire weather forecasters at large fire complexes throughout California and Arizona. The latest fire information is available at: <http://www.nifc.gov/>

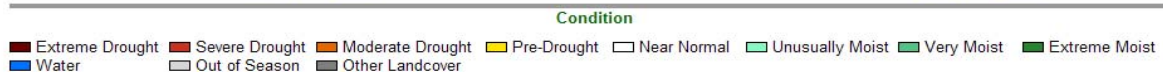
Ham Radio: Some of the area ham radio operators recently participated in a nationwide field day. This is where they talk to different people across the country. One of our ham radio operators sent me the following You Tube video link which was pretty neat, showing how ham radio operators are keeping up with the times, and assisting communities during disaster. It's at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=varHL752Odk>

VegDRI: The latest version of the National Drought Mitigation Center's VegDRI product was released late last week. Below is a comparison of mid-June to late-June and you can see that some areas have gotten a bit drier. No one has gotten "greener." The main website for this product is at: http://drought.unl.edu/vegdiri/VegDRI_Main.htm?EV By clicking on Montana, you can get a statewide look at things, and also a regional look at the four quadrants of the state. Under the "archive" function you can compare it to previous years or weeks.



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Humor for the week:

